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Essential Belief Statement

What has influenced me as a student to become a teacher has been the strength and character of my teachers and the work they did to help me learn. I have been blessed by have very few incompetent teachers that might have discouraged my interest in the field. However, one teacher (biology science teacher 11th grade) taught my class so poorly that it was probably the turning point for me to wanting to teach. I learned next to nothing in that entire class. The teacher was extremely disconnected from the needs of the students, was frequently distracted and it was often difficult to make out what he was saying. The one thing that this teacher had going for him was a huge passion for the subject and a brilliant mind for it. I saw this teacher as the reason I should go into teaching because I want to make sure that there are as few teachers like the biology teacher in the field as possible. I will use this teacher as an example for both the passion and energy I need to have as a teacher and the skill and organization to communicate that knowledge onto my future students.

I selected secondary education social studies because I felt that next to English, the subject and grade level would allow for the most dialogue between teacher and student. The high school level has students who are just beginning to develop their identity and become more independent in the classroom. I felt that this level of education would encourage in-depth discussion of class material and a wider range of instruction options. Social studies encompass nearly all of my favorite subject area with history being my favorite. I chose social studies because I have the most confidence talking about history than any of the other content areas.

As we have found out in class I am a clipboard style learner or teacher. I hope to be able to use this style to provide a well laid out classroom environment. At the same time, provide alternatives or openness to those students who need a little more free choice in the classroom. Though I like to learn in a strict and direct pattern, there are a few areas where I feel the need to do things my way rather than what the teacher or professor directs. An example would be how I take notes and study. I plan on using examples like this to mold the way I teach to include different learning styles in the classroom.

After talking with several teachers over the years and the intro to this class, I expect teaching will be a complex, often times frustrating experience with no certainty of rewards. However, I expect to have an impact (hopefully good) on the students who I teach and impart knowledge about my area of expertise. I think my biggest fear about teaching would be turning into my biology teacher. The most critical aspect of teaching is communicating to the students effectively and that is not countered no matter how intelligent you are in the subject area.

With practicum I expect to get a better understanding on how to use my knowledge of social studies more effectively in the classroom. This includes both communicating to the students and interesting ways to teach social studies. The readings so far in the class have talked about incorporating all skill levels in the classroom rather than teaching to a specific group of people. I find most of the examples rather vague and expect to see more concrete examples or use the examples in a classroom setting myself.